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Bideford
Rural District Council

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Annual Reports

of the

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

and the

SURVEYOR AND INSPECTOR

for the years

1947 and 1948

Gazette Printing Service, Bideford

Bideford Rural District Council
HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Annual Report

For the year 1947, together
with that for the year 1948

PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF :

Medical Officer of Health :
Dr. N. BOWRING BETTS, F.R.C.S., M.O.H.

Surveyor and Sanitary Inspector :
Mr. I. C. WILLIAMS, A.I.A.S., A.M.I.S.E., M.R.S.I.

Clerk :
Mrs. P. M. LOWE

Assistants :
Mr. A. ROWE, Cert. Inst. Hygiene.
Mr. J. W. WHITEFIELD, Cert. Inst. Hygiene

SOCIAL CONDITIONS

The chief occupations of the inhabitants of the District are directly or indirectly associated with agriculture. A great deal of the work is brought about by the popularity of the district for visitors. Many hotels, boarding houses and farms specialise in seasonal catering.

STATISTICS

Area (Acres)	55,770
Population	5,210
Number of inhabited houses	1,425
Rateable Value	£16,664
Sum represented by a Penny Rate	£75/6/2.449

1947 and 1948

ANNUAL REPORTS

Of the Medical Officer of Health for the Bideford Rural District

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Cleverdon House,

Bradworthy.

Gentlemen,

I beg to submit to you my Report dealing with the Public Health and general conditions of the district during the years 1947 and 1948.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your Obedient Servant,

N. BOWRING BETTS,

Medical Officer of Health.

VITAL STATISTICS

Births	1947	1948
Birth Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population	20.6	17.0
Birth Rate per 1,000 for England and Wales	20.5	17.9
Still Birth Rate per 1,000 total (live and still) Births ..	28.0	11.1

Deaths	1947	1948
Death Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population	12.5	13.0
Corrected Death Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population	12.5	13.0
Death Rate per 1,000 for England and Wales ..	12.0	10.8

Deaths from Puerperal Causes

	Deaths		Rate per 1,000 (live and still) Births	
	1947	**1948**	**1947**	**1948**
Puerperal Sepsis	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Other Puerperal Causes ..	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Total	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil

Deaths of Infants under One Year of Age	1947	1948
Legitimate	2	3
Illegitimate	Nil	Nil

Death Rate	1947	1948
All Infants per 1,000 live births	19.2	33.7
Legitimate Infants per 1,000 legitimate live births ..	19.4	35.3
All Infants per 1,000 live births (England and Wales)	41	34
Deaths from Cancer (all ages)	11	6
Deaths from Measles (all ages)	Nil	Nil
Deaths from Whooping Cough (all ages)	Nil	Nil
Deaths from Diarrhoea (under 2 years)	Nil	Nil

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES IN THE AREA

Hospitals

1. **Tuberculosis**

   There are no hospitals for the reception of tuberculous patients in this District. Advanced cases are usually treated at Hawley Sanatorium, Barnstaple. Convalescent patients from this district are sometimes sent to the Devon County Council's large and well-equipped sanatorium at Hawkmoor, South Devon.

2. **Isolation of Infectious Diseases**

   Any cases of infectious diseases which cannot be isolated or properly cared for at home, are conveyed to the Bideford and District Joint Isolation Hospital, which comprises 30 beds, 4 cots, and 8 observation cubicles.

During 1947 1 case was admitted to the Isolation Hospital from the Bideford Rural District, suffering from Cerebro-Spinal Meningitis. During 1948 1 case was admitted to the Isolation Hospital from the Bideford Rural District, suffering from Scarlet Fever.

3. **Smallpox**

The Smallpox Hospital of the Devon County Council provides treatment for any case of smallpox that may arise in this District.

4. **General**

The Bideford and District Hospital serves the District extremely well for General Medical and Surgical treatment. The Hospital contains about 40 beds. Extension work is in progress. The North Devon Infirmary and the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospitals are also used.

5. **Maternity Services**

Facilities for the admission of patients to the Grenville Nursing Home, Bideford, have been arranged by the Devon County Council. Emergency maternity cases are admitted to the North Devon Infirmary.

District Nursing

There are six District Nurses, all qualified midwives, working in the district.

Ante-Natal Clinics

An ante-natal clinic is held at Bideford.

Child Welfare Clinic

There are Child Welfare Clinics held at Hartland and Bideford.

Venereal Diseases

A Clinic for venereal disease is held at the North Devon Infirmary twice weekly.

Orthopaedic Clinic

A Clinic is held twice a month at Barnstaple.

Birth Control Clinic

A clinic is held once a month at the North Devon Dispensary, Barnstaple.

Laboratory Facilities

The District is admirably served by the Devon County Council Medical Department's Bacteriological Laboratory, which is situated at Dix's Field, Exeter, and by the Pathological Department of the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital.

Disinfection of Infected Bedding and Clothing

By arrangement with the Bideford and District Joint Isolation Hospital Board, any infected bedding and clothing can be disinfected in the steam disinfecting apparatus at the Isolation Hospital.

Ambulance Facilities

There is a St. John Ambulance stationed at Bideford, which serves the Rural District. There is also a separate ambulance stationed at the Isolation Hospital, which is used for the conveyance of patients suffering from any of the notifiable infectious diseases.

PREVALENCE OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Notifications

Diseases	Total number of cases Notfied		Cases admitted to Hospital		Total Deaths	
	1947	**1948**	**1947**	**1948**	**1947**	**1948**
Scarlet Fever	Nil	1	Nil	1	Nil	Nil
Diphtheria	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Puerperal Pyrexia	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Pneumonia	2	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Dysentery	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Erysipelas	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Opthalmia Neonatorum ..	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Anterior Poliomyelitis ..	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Measles	11	5	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Whooping Cough	2	39	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Acute Encephalitis Lethargica ..	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Cerebro Spinal Meningitis	1	Nil	1	Nil	Nil	Nil

Diphtheria Immunisation

A high proportion of the Children under 15 years of age have availed themselves of the above scheme. Each school in the district has been visited.

Tuberculosis

The number of cases of Tuberculosis remaining on the register was as follows :—

		31st. Dec. **1947**	31st Dec. **1948**
(*a*) **Pulmonary**	Males	7	7
	Females	6	7
(*b*) **Non-Pulmonary**	Males	3	5
	Females	6	5

Total Cases on the register, December 31st	1948	24
,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,,	1947	22
,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,,	1946	21
,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,,	1945	16
,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,,	1944	21
,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,,	1943	23
,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,,	1942	18
,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,,	1941	17
,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,,	1940	19
,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,, ,,	1939	18

1. New Cases

During the year, 1947, 3 cases were notified in accordance with the regulations. During 1948, 4 cases were similarly notified :—

		1947	1948
(*a*) **Pulmonary**	Males	2	Nil
	Females ..	Nil	Nil
(*b*) **Non-Pulmonary**	Males	1	3
	Females ..	Nil	1
	Totals	3	4

The following are the notification for the preceding eight years :

	Pulmonary	Non-Pulmonary	Total
1946	3	2	5
1945	2	0	2
1944	4	0	4
1943	3	4	7
1942	5	1	6
1941	2	0	2
1940	1	3	4
1939	2	1	3

2. Age Periods (New Cases)

	Pulmonary				Non-Pulmonary			
	1947		**1948**		**1947**		**1948**	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Under 1 year	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1 to 5 years	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5 to 10 years	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10 to 15 years	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
15 to 25 years	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
25 to 35 years	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
35 to 45 years	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
45 to 55 years	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
55 to 65 years	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
65 and over	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unknown	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

MORTALITY FROM TUBERCULOSIS

Total Deaths—1948, 1 (Respiratory 0, Non-Respiratory 1).
1947, 3 (Respiratory 1, Non-Respiratory 2).

Age Periods	Respiratory				Non-Respiratory			
	1947		**1948**		**1947**		**1948**	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Under I year	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1 to 5 years	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5 to 10 years	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10 to 15 years	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
15 to 25 years	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
25 to 35 years	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1
35 to 45 years	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
45 to 55 years	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
55 to 65 years	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
65 and over	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

CAUSES OF DEATH DURING THE YEAR UNDER REVIEW

Causes of Death	1947		1948	
	M.	F.	M.	F.
Typhoid and Paratyphoid Fevers	0	0	0	0
Measles	0	0	0	0
Scarlet Fever	0	0	0	0
Whooping Cough	0	0	0	0
Diphtheria	0	0	0	0
Influenza	0	0	0	1
Encephalitis Lethargica	0	0	0	0
Cerebro-Spinal Fever	0	0	0	0
Tuberculosis of Respiratory System	0	1	1	1
Other Tuberculosis Diseases	0	0	0	1
Syphilis	0	0	0	0
General Paralysis of the Insane, Tabes Dorsalis	0	0	0	0
Cancer, Malignant Disease	6	5	4	4
Diabetes	0	1	0	1
Cerebral Haemorrhage, etc.	3	5	5	4
Heart Disease	10	10	13	10
Aneurism	0	0	0	0
Other Circulatory Diseases	2	1	5	3
Bronchitis	1	2	1	1
Pneumonia (all forms)	0	1	2	2
Other Respiratory Diseases	0	0	0	0
Peptic Ulcer	0	0	0	0
Diarrhoea, etc. (under 2 years)	0	0	0	0
Appendicitis	0	0	0	0
Cirrhosis of Liver	0	0	0	0
Other Diseases of Liver, etc.	0	0	0	0
Other Digestive Diseases	0	2	1	0
Acute and Chronic Nephritis	2	2	1	1
Puerperal Sepsis	0	0	0	0
Other Puerperal Causes	0	0	0	0
Congenital Debility, Premature Births, Malformations, etc	0	2	1	1
Senility	0	0	0	0
Suicide	0	0	0	0
Road Traffic Accident	1	0	0	0
Other Violence	2	0	1	0
All other Causes	3	1	2	1
Causes Ill-Defined or Unknown	0	0	0	0
Special Causes (included above) :—				
Small-Pox	0	0	0	0
Poliomyelitis	0	0	0	0
Polioencephalitis	0	0	0	0
All Causes	30	33	37	31

I am, Gentlemen,

Your Obedient Servant,

N. BOWRING BETTS,

Medical Officer of Health.

1947 and 1948

ANNUAL REPORTS

Of the Surveyor and Inspector for the Bideford Rural District

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Council Offices,

Market Place,

Bideford.

August, 1949.

Gentlemen,

I beg to submit to you a report relating to the work carried out by this department during the years 1947 and 1948. The details have been brought up to the date of going to Press, where topical matters are discussed.

The Council is proceeding with its schemes for the sewerage of the district and with the erection of new houses. The undersigned has the responsibility of preparing the plans and specifications required for this work but the appointment in 1949 of two Junior Assistants, Messrs. A. Rowe and J. W. Whitefield, should help in carrying out the manifold duties now allotted to this department.

I recognise with grateful thanks the assistance of Mrs. Lowe, and of Messrs. Rowe and Whitefield.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your Obedient Servant,

I. C. WILLIAMS.

Surveyor and Inspector.

Short-Term Post-War Housing

In the last report, reference was made to the very great amount of effort required by all concerned in the building of Council Houses on so many different sites. These sites form miniature estates, in most cases, with their own means of access, water supplies, and sewerage; and the Council, in co-operation with the Ministry of Health and County Planning Department, is responsible for the whole of the work involved from the first visit to select the site to the maintenance of the houses after they are handed over.

The following post-war houses have now been occupied :—

Abbotsham	6
Alwington	4
Bulkworthy	2
Buckland Brewer	8
Clovelly	8
East Putford	2
Hartland	18
Monkleigh	12
Total	60

War-Time Houses

In 1944 the Council built four houses :

Natcott, Hartland	2
Crosspark, Woolsery	2
Total	4

Pre-War Houses

Abbotsham	2
Alwington	4
Buckland Brewer	2
Clovelly	2
Hartland	4
Littleham	2
Monkleigh	2
Parkham	6
Woolsery	2
Total	26

Pre-War Houses	26
War-Time Houses	4
Post-War Houses to date	60
Total	90

One family in every sixteen in the rural district now lives in a Council house.

A further 12 traditional houses are to be built from allocations now outstanding in the parishes of :

Littleham	2
Newton St. Petrock	2
Parkham..	2
Alwington	2
Monkleigh	2
Welcombe	2

In the case of Littleham and Alwington work is to commence almost immediately and in the other four parishes, all of which have water supply difficulties, work will commence as soon as tenders are approved and Ministry sanction obtained.

Rural Housing Survey

The Council feels that the time is still inopportune to proceed with the Survey required by the 1944 Hobhouse Report, because labour and material are not available to carry out improvements to existing premises.

214 houses have been inspected in detail under the above heading, however.

HOUSING (RURAL WORKERS) ACTS

During the two years, no cottages were reconditioned under the Housing (Rural Workers) Acts. The total number of houses reconditioned in the district since the inception of the Scheme is 79.

The Ministry of Health had undertaken to revise the legislation dealing with this subject and under the 1949 Housing Act provision has been made for future reconditioning when circumstances permit.

PLANNING SCHEME

All building plans submitted to the Council are examined under the Building Byelaws (adopted in 1938 with the approval of the Ministry of Health) and by the County Council Planning Department.

The coming into operation of the 1947 Planning Act has meant, paradoxically enough, that the relinquishing of the Council's interim planning powers has greatly increased the amount of work which has to be done by the Council and the Staff.

Provision of Main Water Supplies

The precarious water position of the district is likely to be relieved in the near future by the advent of the mains of the North Devon Water Board. Progress on this scheme has been speeded up recently and we are hopeful that before the next Annual Report is published at least one part of our district will have been serviced.

At present there are local main water supplies in the following villages :—

Abbotsham
Buckland Brewer
Clovelly
Hartland

An ancillary to the main Water Board Scheme will be the installation of a 275,000 gallon reservoir at Higher Clovelly, which will supply Clovelly and Hartland Parishes with the extra water they need and also increase the supply areas in these parishes. This work would mean that a large and important part of the district would be supplied with water long before the trunk mains would have reached the northern areas.

Sewerage

This Council is to provide its own separate new sewerage schemes in the following built-up areas :—

Alwington (Fairy Cross and Ford)
Buckland Brewer
Bucks Mills
Clovelly Village
Higher Clovelly
Horns Cross
Littleham
Monkleigh
Parkham
Saltrens
Stoke

Of these, the Clovelly Village, Buckland Brewer and Horns Cross schemes have already been approved by the Ministry of Health and the Horns Cross scheme has been installed. The Clovelly Village scheme is to commence in 1949 and it is hoped that the Buckland Brewer scheme will proceed early in 1950.

The Council propose to prepare engineering plans to enable them to install these works at the earliest opportunity.

Circular 119/44 Ministry of Health confirms that separate sewage works to each group of houses will often be the only method available.

As mentioned in the last report the sewage works serving Hartland and Woolsery will require to be greatly altered and enlarged in due course so as to deal with the increased amount of effluent which will be occasioned by improved water facilities.

ANALYSIS OF MAIN WATER AND SEWERAGE FACILITIES IN THE DISTRICT

PARISH	NUMBER OF HOUSES WITH :—				
	Piped main water supply under pressure into or onto houses.	Main water supply under pressure within 100 yards of house boundary	No water under pressure available; for groups of 20 or more houses in a circle ¼ mile in diameter.	Main sewer connections for groups of 20 or more houses in a circle ¼ mile in diameter.	No main sewer connection for groups of 20 or more houses in a circle ¼ mile in diameter.
ABBOTSHAM	52	Nil	14	18	27
ALWINGTON	2	Nil	31	Nil	31
BUCKLAND BREWER	Nil	55	8	18	45
BULKWORTHY	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
CLOVELLY VILLAGE	96	7	Nil	98	5
Slerra Area	Nil	Nil	39	Nil	39
EAST PUTFORD	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
HARTLAND	Nil	92	33	63	62
Stoke Area	Nil	Nil	21	Nil	21
LANDCROSS	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
LITTLEHAM	2	Nil	33	Nil	33
MONKLEIGH	Nil	Nil	39	Nil	39
Saltren's Area	Nil	Nil	21	Nil	21
NEWTON ST. PETROCK	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
PARKHAM	1	Nil	31	9	22
WELCOMBE	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
WOOLSERY	Nil	Nil	49	40	9
Bucks Mills Area	Nil	Nil	32	Nil	32

Individual Methods of Sewage Disposal

Under the " Circle/Density " system of grouping it will be seen that it is unlikely that Bulkworthy, East Putford, Newton St. Petrock and Welcombe, together with all the isolated farmhouses and cottages throughout the whole of our district, will be given the facility of main drainage until such time as a sufficient number of additional houses are erected nearby to demand a main sewerage scheme. Drainage of isolated buildings presents a difficult health problem.

To assist persons proposing to install water carriage drainage systems in isolated areas, this department provides plans of small treatment works free of cost.

Polluted Private Wells

A great many private wells in the district are merely catchpits for the water contained in the subsoil, and are therefore very liable to pollution, chiefly from nearby defective drainage. This department gives advice and prepares working drawings in order to assist in the cleaning-up of well water supplies.

Acid Waters and Lead Poisoning

Tests carried out by this department of many well water supplies in the district have continued to prove that the water, with few exceptions, is acid in re-action, and a danger thus exists from lead poisoning.

The general effect of lead intake may be said to constitute a gradual, insidious and cumulative menace which is accepted as being very serious.

The tests referred to above are made by this department as a routine matter at no cost to the owner or tenant, and permit us to recommend suitable piping for the water. It would be a good thing to make water byelaws which could be interpreted among other things, to prohibit the use of lead pipes for plumbosolvent waters.

General Inspections and Visits

A very large number of inspections has been carried out in connection with the routine work of the department despite the shortage of staff. The appointment of the two Junior Assistants, Messrs. Rowe and Whitefield, in 1949, will mean that more attention can be devoted to routine sanitary work and in the next report full details will be given of the inspections carried out.

The general inspections made include visits in connection with water supplies, drainage and sewerage, temporary dwellings, bakehouses, public conveniences, refuse collection and disposal, rats and mice, schools, shops, cowsheds and dairies and at the Public Abattoir, Bideford, housing inspections under the Public Health and Housing Acts and visits of inquiry and disinfection in cases of infectious diseases.

A list of caterers has been obtained from the Food Control Office and routine inspections of all premises on this list is to be carried out.

RIVERS AND STREAMS

In this district there are few trade waters or effluent to deal with and as a consequence, it has not been necessary to devote much attention to the prevention of polluting matters entering rivers or streams. There is room for improvement, however, but the action must come in the form of a tightening up of drainage treatment arrangements. The sewerage scheme for Horns Cross has helped to remedy a bad example of river pollution in the district.

PUBLIC CLEANSING

Public scavenging is carried out regularly by Contract in Abbotsham, Higher Clovelly, Clovelly Village, Hartland and Stoke.

There are six refuse dumps in the district at two of which controlled tipping is practised. At the remaining four dumps villagers make their own arrangements for the conveyance of refuse.

A report has been prepared for the Council on the possibilities of a comprehensive collection scheme for the whole district.

SMOKE ABATEMENT

No action under this heading has been necessary during the period under review.

SWIMMING BATHS AND POOLS

There are no public or privately owned swimming baths or pools in the district.

ERADICATION OF BED BUGS

It is satisfactory to note that, in this District, no complaints relating to the existence of bed bugs have been received and accordingly no action has been taken.

SCHOOLS

The schools in the district are visited when necessary. This Department has brought sanitary defects to the notice of the County Council who have co-operated amicably.

The " Milk in Schools Scheme " continues to operate successfully. The water supplies to the schools are in most cases derived from wells on the premises.

The School Canteens are greatly appreciated by parents and children alike, providing as they do a varied and well-balanced diet in congenial surroundings.

MEAT SUPPLY

Since the centralisation of slaughtering arrangements of the Ministry of Food came into force on January 15th, 1940, the inspectorial duties have been largely confined to inspection of meat at the Public Abattoir, Bideford, by arrangement with Mr. John Ackland, Meat and Food Inspector, Bideford, as and when assistance was required. On no occasion was it necessary to condemn meat in this district after it had once been inspected at the Public Abattoir, a tribute to the zeal of the Bideford Food Inspector, and the officers and staff of the slaughterhouse.

FOOD AND DRUGS ACT, 1938

Twelve premises have been approved and licensed for the preparation or manufacture of sausages and potted, pressed or pickled meat. Four premises have also been approved for the sale, or the manufacture for sale, of ice-cream.

MILK SUPPLY

Visits have been paid as and when possible to dairy premises but now that the control of milk production has been passed to the Ministry of Agriculture, our main activities will be concerned with the retail distribution of milk supplies.

Number of Registered Milk Producers, all grades ..	312
Number of " Tuberculin Tested " Milk Producers ..	25
Number of " Accredited " Milk Producers	15
Number supplying under the " Milk in Schools " Scheme from Ungraded Premises	6

I am, Gentlemen,

Your Obedient Servant,

I. C. WILLIAMS,

Surveyor and Inspector.